

STAR WARS™

DARTH MAUL



MARVEL

004

BUNN
ROSS
WOODARD

DARTH MAUL

Book I, Part IV

Jedi Padawan Eldra Kaitis is the prisoner of profiteering gangster Xev Xrexus. Xrexus has gathered the most dangerous crime bosses in the galaxy to participate in an auction to purchase the Padawan.

Sith apprentice Darth Maul has infiltrated the auction against the will of his Master, the mysterious Darth Sidious. With a group of bounty hunters—including Cad Bane and Aurra Sing—Maul plans on kidnapping the Padawan and killing her in order to satiate his desire for vengeance against the Jedi.

Though the kidnapping proceeds successfully, Maul is baited by the Padawan, who claims to be his equal and demands a fair fight. Their potential duel is cut short when Xrexus, having discovered the theft, has their vessel shot down—and invites the disappointed crime bosses from the auction to hunt them for sport....

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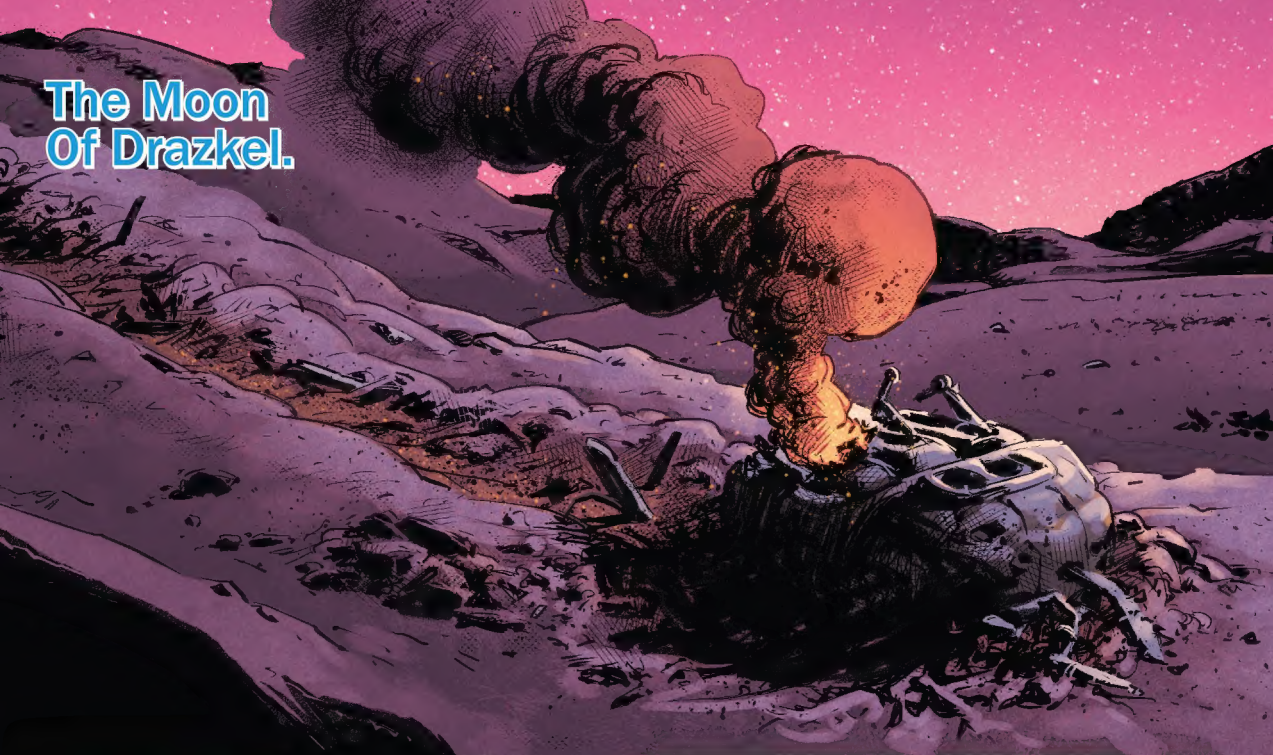
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The Moon Of Drazkel.

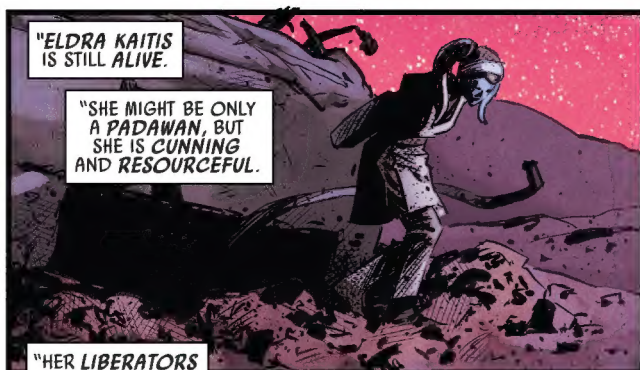


"THE FREIGHTER HAS **CRASHED**, YES, BUT WE ARE STILL READING **ACTIVE LIFE SIGNS** NEAR THE WRECKAGE.



"ELDRA KAITIS IS STILL ALIVE.

"SHE MIGHT BE ONLY A **PADAWAN**, BUT SHE IS **CUNNING** AND **RESOURCEFUL**."



"HER **LIBERATORS** ARE ALSO VERY MUCH ALIVE.

"AND I'M CERTAIN THEY WILL PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL **THRILL** AND **CHALLENGE** TO THOSE **DARING ENOUGH** TO PURSUE THEM."



I KNOW MANY OF YOU WERE **DISAPPOINTED** WHEN YOU DID NOT PLACE THE **WINNING BID**.

BUT WHEN ONE DOOR **CLOSES**, ANOTHER **OPENS**.





MOST OF YOU WERE PLANNING ON KILLING HER ANYWAY.

SO WHY NOT MAKE A GAME OUT OF IT?

COMPLETE AGAINST EACH OTHER FOR BRAGGING RIGHTS AND A SHINY NEW TROPHY.

THE PADAWAN, DEAD AT YOUR FEET.

THOSE WHO ABDUCTED HER, BURNED TO ASH.

THIS IS, OF COURSE, A PAY-TO-PLAY SCENARIO.

THE SOONER YOU PAY...

...THE SOONER YOU CAN BE PLANETSIDE...



"... THE SOONER YOU CAN CLAIM YOUR PRIZE."

YOU SURVIVED.

I WAS STARTING TO WORRY ABOUT WHO WAS GOING TO PAY FOR THIS OPERATION...

...AND I MEAN PAY WITH A HAZARD BONUS...

...IF YOU WERE DEAD.



THE CHARGE WAS SET FROM THE INSIDE...

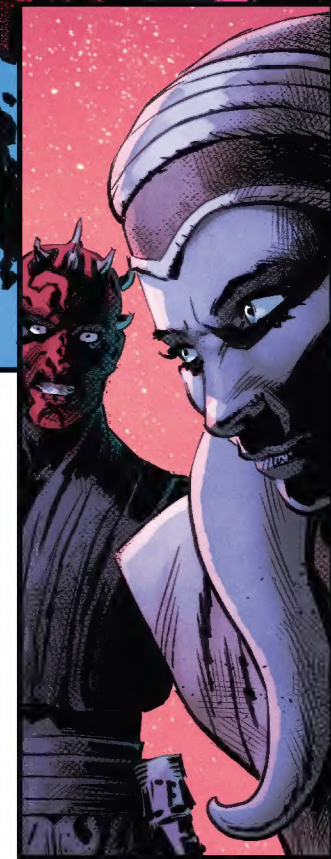
...POSITIONED TO BLOW OUTWARD...

...DISABLING THE SHIP WITH MINIMAL DAMAGE TO CARGO AND PASSENGERS.



THEY WANT THE PADAWAN ALIVE.

THE PADAWAN HAS A NAME.



EITHER WAY, WE NEED TO FIND A WAY OFF THIS ROCK. AND FAST.



YOU SAID IT, BANE.

WE'VE GOT SEVERAL SHIPS COMING IN FOR A LANDING.

I'M BETTING THEY AREN'T HERE TO PLAY NICE.



XEV XREXUS IS MAKING A BIT OF SPORT OUT OF US, AURRA.

US TAKING THE PADAWAN THE WAY WE DID MADE HER LOOK BAD.

SHE'S GOING TO SAVE FACE AND MAKE A BIT OF PROFIT.

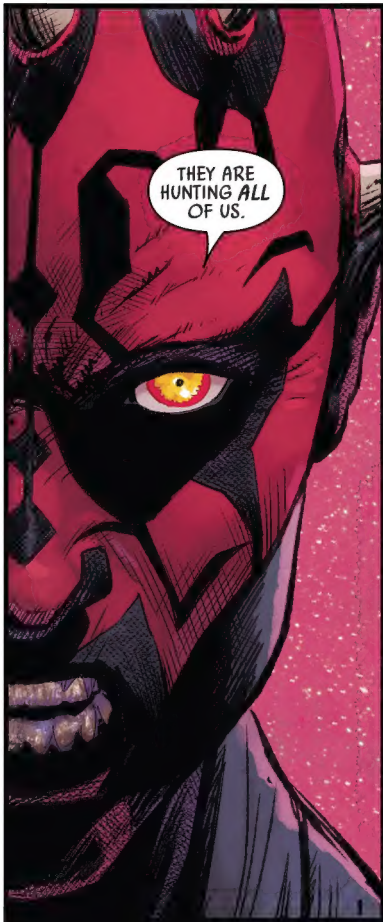


THEY'RE HUNTING ME.



YOU WERE GOING TO DIE ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.

YOU WERE DESTINED TO DIE FROM THE MOMENT YOU FIRST STEPPED INTO A JEDI TEMPLE.



THEY ARE HUNTING ALL OF US.



WELL... YOU KIND OF BROUGHT IT ON YOURSELVES.



YOUR FRIEND'S GOT FIRE IN HER BELLY.

I LIKE THAT.

SHE'S RIGHT, OF COURSE.

WE CAME HERE LOOKING FOR A FIGHT.



WE'LL SPLIT UP.



"THE HUNTERS WILL LIKELY BE **MOST** INTERESTED IN THE PADAWAN.

"WE'LL LEAD THEM AWAY.

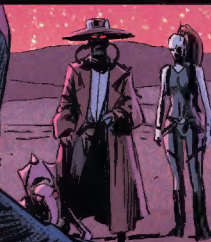


"THAT SHOULD GIVE YOUR TEAM ROOM TO... **REQUISITION** ONE OF THOSE SHIPS."

KILL ANYONE WHO GETS IN YOUR WAY.

SCUTTLE ANY SHIP WE DON'T NEED.

WE'LL **STRAND** WHAT FEW SURVIVORS THERE MIGHT BE ON THIS DESOLATE MOON.





NOT
A BAD
IDEA.

WHAT MAKES
YOU THINK WE
WON'T JUST LEAVE
YOU HERE ALONG
WITH THE
REST?



I'M
COUNTING ON THE
SUPPOSITION THAT
YOU WANT TO EARN
YOUR HAZARD
PAY.



YOU
HEARD THE
MAN.

WE'VE GOT
ANOTHER SHIP
TO STEAL.



HAS
ANYONE SEEN
TEK-TEK?

MY
GUESS?
HE GOT
HIMSELF
VAPORIZED
IN THE
EXPLOSION.



"LUCKY
HIM."



HNNNN.

...NNNN...



HNNH?

DROID!

DROID--
HELP ME!



HELP YOU?

MY WORD!

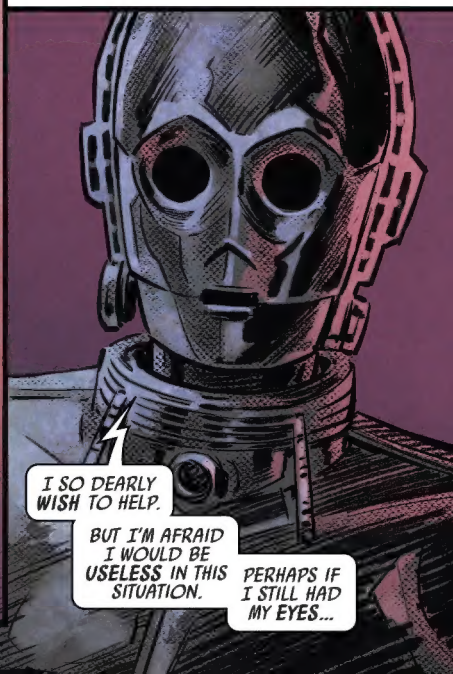
SUCH A
STRANGE
REQUEST.



W-WHAT'S
WRONG WITH
YOU?

DON'T
JUST STAND
THERE!

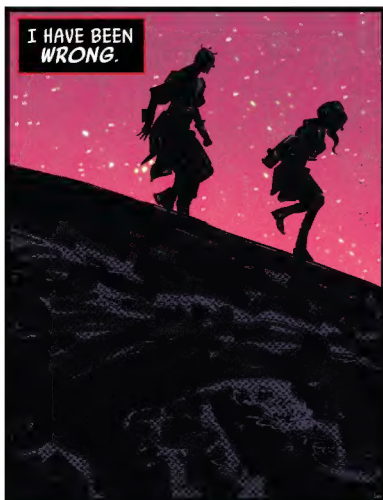
HELP ME!



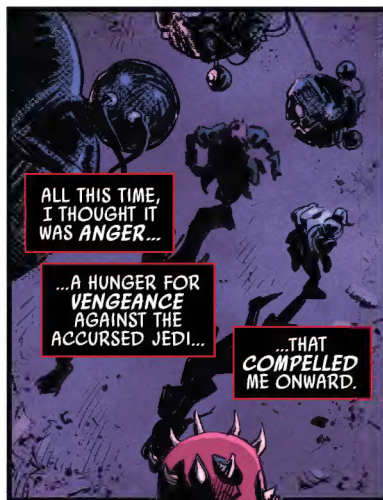
I SO DEARLY
WISH TO HELP.

BUT I'M AFRAID
I WOULD BE
USELESS IN THIS
SITUATION.

PERHAPS IF
I STILL HAD
MY EYES...



I HAVE BEEN
WRONG.



ALL THIS TIME,
I THOUGHT IT
WAS ANGER...

...A HUNGER FOR
VENGEANCE
AGAINST THE
ACCURSED JEDI...

...THAT
COMPELLED
ME ONWARD.



THOSE DESIRES
ARE PART OF
ME, YES.

ASOOP?
FVOOZ

I WILL SEE THE JEDI
PAY FOR WHAT THEY
DID TO THE SITH.



BUT I AM NOT
DRIVEN BY
THOSE FEELINGS.



THEY ARE
CLOSE.

IT IS
ANTICIPATION
THAT MOVES
ME TOWARD MY
INEVITABLE
GOAL.



IT IS
EXCITEMENT.





MAY THE
FORCE BE
WITH YOU.

SPARE
ME.

I DO
NOT NEED
YOUR JEDI
PLATITUDES.

THE
FORCE IS
ALWAYS
WITH ME.

AND SO,
SHE KNOWS.

SHE MUST HAVE
SUSPECTED
MY NATURE.

SHE MUST
HAVE SENSED
MY POWER...
MY HATRED.

AND
IN HER
I FELT...

...NO
FEAR.

THIS
PLEASES
ME.

SHE HAS BEEN
WELL-TRAINED BY
HER MASTERS.

SHE WOULD
HAVE SURELY
BEEN ACCEPTED
AS A JEDI
KNIGHT SOON.

WHEN I
KILL HER...

...I WILL KNOW THE
SATISFACTION OF
TAKING A JEDI'S LIFE.



THE FIRST
OF MANY.



SHE IS
WATCHING ME,
I KNOW.

TAKING MY
MEASURE.



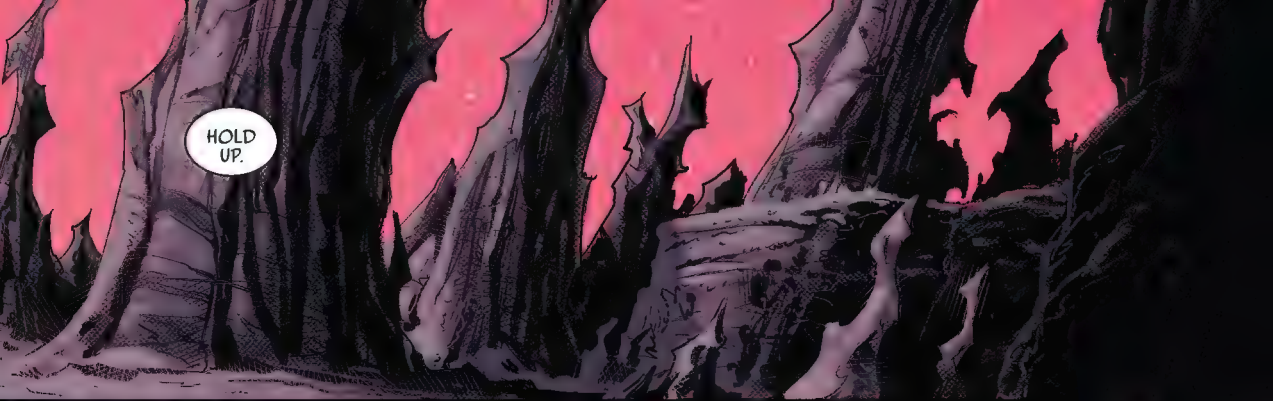
AS I AM
TAKING *HERS*.

SHE HAS
ACCEPTED
HER FATE...

...OR
RESIGNED
ME TO MINE.



GOOD.



HOLD
UP.



SOMEONE
CAME
THROUGH
HERE.

NOT
LONG
AGO.

WE'RE
CLOSE.



THE
JEDI'S
MINE.



HATE TO
DISAPPOINT.
NO JEDI
HERE.



BUT YOU
CAN TAKE YOUR
BEST SHOT WITH ME
IF THAT TICKLES
YOUR FANCY.



LOWER
YOUR GUNS,
BOYS.



IF THIS
SCUM WANTS
A SHOWDOWN,
I'LL GIVE HIM
ONE.



IF HE
GUNS ME
DOWN, LET
HIM
WALK.



MUCH
OBLIGED.



DON'T
BE. YOU AIN'T
KILLING ME
TO--



HSSSSK!



ZRAK!

ZRAK!

VRAK!

WOMP
RATS IN A
BARREL.



SORRY,
FELLAS.

YOU'D BEST
BELIEVE I
WAS FASTER ON
THE DRAW THAN
YOUR BOSS.

BUT THAT
DONT MEAN
I'M GONNA
PLAY FAIR.



SITH.



YES.

I THOUGHT
YOU WERE ALL
GONE.
ALL...

DEAD.
ALMOST
ALL OF US.

THANKS
TO THE
JEDI.

AFTER ALL
THIS TIME...
WHY NOW?

WHY SHOW
YOURSELF
HERE?

I WOULD'VE
THOUGHT THE
SITH LIKED THEIR
SECRECY.

WHY WOULD
IT BE WORTH
SPOILING THAT
TO COME
AFTER ME?

MY
EXISTENCE
WILL **REMAIN**
A SECRET.

I COULD
HAVE RUN,
YOU KNOW.

I COULD
HAVE SLIPPED
AWAY DURING
THE FIGHT.

YOU
COULD HAVE
GIVEN INTO
YOUR FEAR.

NO.
THAT IS
NOT YOUR
WAY...EVEN IF YOU
WERE NOT
A JEDI.



WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR, THEN?

LET'S JUST GET ON WITH IT.



NO.

THIS IS A SACRED RITE.

I WILL NOT LET IT BE SULLIED BY THESE BASE THUGS AND CRIMINALS.



YOU MEAN YOU DON'T WANT WITNESSES.

THAT'S WHY YOU SENT THOSE BOUNTY HUNTERS AWAY.

YOU'RE HIDING SOMETHING... OR FROM SOMEONE.

I CAN FEEL IT.



WHO ARE YOU AFRAID OF?

Later...

THERE IS
ANGER WITHIN
THIS YOUNG
PADAWAN.

I CAN
SENSE IT.

I CAN SEE
IT IN HER
ACTIONS.

ANOTHER TIME,
ANOTHER PLACE...

...SHE MIGHT HAVE
BEEN TEMPTED TO
THE DARK SIDE.

SHE MIGHT
HAVE BEEN
AN ALLY.

BY COMING HERE,
THOUGH, BY SEEKING
HER OUT, I HAVE
TAKEN AWAY SUCH
A CHOICE.

MY MASTER
MUST NEVER
KNOW I WAS
HERE.

I HAVE
CONDEMNED
HER.

WE
NEEDN'T BE
ENEMIES.

WE DON'T
HAVE TO
FIGHT.

YOU DON'T
HAVE TO GIVE
YOURSELF OVER
SO COMPLETELY
TO THIS...
DARKNESS.

IF YOU
BELIEVE THAT,
YOU ARE NOT THE
JEDI! I THOUGHT
YOU WERE.

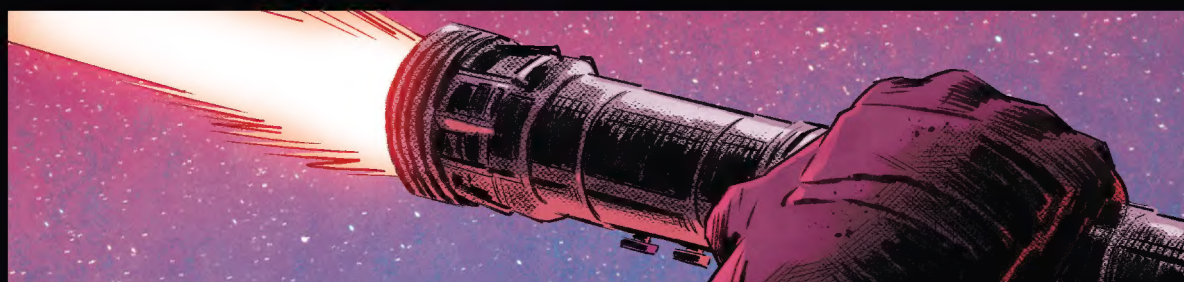
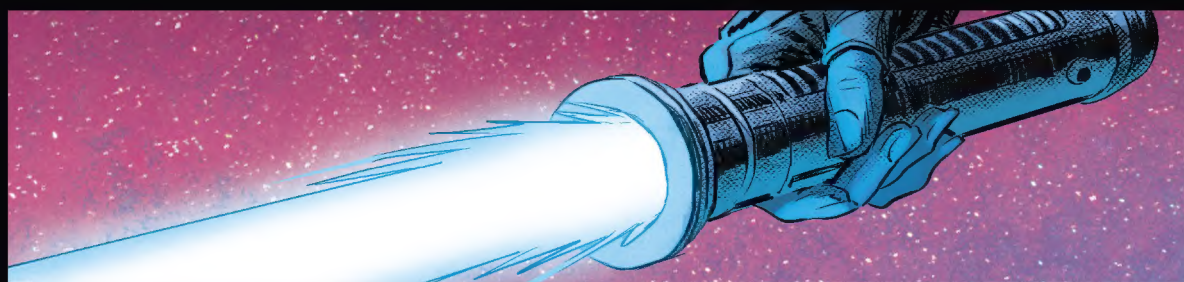
YEAH.

I THOUGHT
MAYBE I WOULD GIVE
YOU A CHANCE TO BACK DOWN
BEFORE YOU GET YOURSELF
FIRST **HUMILIATED** AND
THEN KILLED.

THAT'S
ALL.

THE
SAME CHANCE
YOUR JEDI
PREDECESSORS
GAVE THE
SITH?

ALL
RIGHT,
THEN.



AT LAST.

To be continued...

DARTH MAUL

NEXT ISSUE:

